

Snow Angels

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Snow Angels

The King's Labyrinth Snow Angels 1/?

Amalthya was busy at her easel when there was a knock at the door. "Come in!" Silviet wandered into the room she was painting in and stared at the easel for a moment.

"Another one!"

"What?"

"Since you got back, your art has changed."

"How so?"

"Well," she said thoughtfully, "they're still fantasy, but they seem more realistic, like you've actually been there."

"Call it a new phase." Amalthya still hadn't disclosed all that had happened to her during her 'illness' to her friends and family, so she found her answers had to be more elusive than she wanted them to.

"And who," Silviet continued, "is he?" She held up a painting Amalthya had just recently finished. It depicted Jareth as she remembered him that first night they were together; her last night at the castle. He was sitting in the huge four poster bed, sheets at his waist. Silver moonlight filtered in through an unseen window causing his skin to glow like alabaster. His eyes were haunting.

"You've seen him before."

"Yeah, I know, 'Ann's mystery man'. He's in all your work. But my point is, he was always hiding before, like he didn't want to be

seen. This- " She said gesturing to the painting, "-is very intimate. Is there something you're hiding, Ann?"

"Me, no. Why?"

"They're talking about him at the gallery. Rosslin thinks he can't possibly be a real person, and *I* know you almost never use models. Jeff- you know how silly Jeff is- he said he was some sort of demon lover inspiring your work."

Amalthya said nothing for a moment. Silviet gave her a curious look and raised one eyebrow. Finally Amalthya managed some nervous laughter. "I think Jeff's been reading Faust before bed!"

Silviet laughed. "Yeah, really! I mean, come on. But he's a model, right? Or someone you met while you were away." She deftly skirted around the word 'ill' because she didn't like it's implications. "I can tell you're infatuated with him." She said slyly. "Tell me his name, please?" She gave her friend her best puppy dog eyes. "Just between us?"

Amalthya sighed. "Jareth. His name is Jareth."

"Well then! I *knew* Jeff wasn't right!" She laughed again. "I guess I'd better let you get back to your work. See you later Ann." She started for the front door.

"Silviet, Wait!" Amalthya called out, much to her own surprise. "Why don't you stay and have coffee? You can help me frame that picture when we're done." She motioned to the one Silviet had been holding before. "I just bought a nice frame for it. Here, I'll show you." She wiped her paint covered hands on the old jeans she always wore when she painted. She went into the storage closet and took out a large plastic shopping bag. "You'd better take it out. My hands are all messy." She handed her the bag.

Silviet took it and pulled the large wooden frame out of the bag. It was made of dark wood, highly lacquered so that it shown even in the weak sunlight that filtered in through the small window. "This is a really nice frame. Is it mahogany?" Amalthya nodded. "It must have put you back a bit."

"Well, money's not really a concern. Dad left me plenty. Just an early Christmas present for myself, I guess." She shrugged. "I only really have you and Xander to buy for anyway." Amalthya walked into the kitchen to wash her hands and start making the coffee.

"Speaking of Christmas, Xander's having the Christmas party at the gallery this year. I assume you're coming?"

"Yeah. I wasn't planing on flying back to see my grandparents until New Year's anyway." She called back over her shoulder.

"And bring a date okay?"

"Oh, thanks for the notice. I'll just pop out and buy one for the party." She rolled her eyes.

"What about the poet guy you brought last year?"

"Jonathan? No way. That was a total mistake. Remember he got drunk and started yelling all that horrific poetry?"

Silviet giggled. "Yeah, and you spent the night on my couch because you wouldn't let him drive you home."

"Just as well, I found out later he almost crashed the car and the cops arrested him."

"Oh no! Your serious?"

Amalthya nodded. "Yup. That was the end of that."

Silviet sat down on the couch and started flipping through some old magazines. "Well, what about this Jareth guy? Why don't you bring him?"

Amalthya emerged from the kitchen with two steaming mugs. "I couldn't." She handed Silviet one cup and sat down next to her.

"And why not?"

"I don't think he'd fit in." She blushed slightly at the thought of seeing Jareth again.

"And Jonathan did?" She laughed. "Come on. I'm dying to meet him."

"Well...." a grin broke out on her face. "Okay. I'll have to see if he can come, though."

"Fine. Do you want to frame that picture now?"

"Yeah let's. And we can hang it up too."

"You're not selling this one?"

"No. I'm rather fond of it. I thought it would look good in the bedroom."

She stood in front of the vanity mirror in her small bedroom brushing her long dark hair and scolding herself for being so nervous. "He said I could drop by any time, and it's not like I'm asking him to reorder time and space for me. It's just a Christmas party." She took a deep breath. She wasn't sure if she should attribute queasy felling she had in the pit of her stomach to nervousness or just excitement at getting to see him again. "All right. Let's see if I can make this work." She took another deep breath and squeezed her eyes shut in concentration. "To Jareth." She whispered. There was a familiar swirling of air and she felt the carpet under her feet vanish only to be replaced with hard stone.

The sensation that ran through him was all too recognizable. Someone was using magic to enter the castle. He jumped up from his throne as

the intruder appeared in front of him. It was Amalthya. She was casually dressed in faded jeans and a white button up shirt that was at least a size too big. Her dark brown hair fell around her shoulders in a shining cascade.

"I guess I just couldn't stay away." She smiled.

He laughed and pulled her into an embrace, savoring the fresh soapy smell of her skin mingled with a light rose scented perfume. "I missed you."

"I wasn't gone that long."

"Every minute you're not here is an eternity."

She slapped his arm playfully. "Now you're just trying to sweet talk me. I need to discuss something with you."

"All right." He kissed her behind her ear and she shivered.

"I mean it."

"And I'm listening." He murmured as he continued his seductive manipulations.

"Not like this!" She pulled away from him. "I'm serious." She pouted, hands on her hips. He reached out to trace the lines of her frowning little mouth with the tip of his finger but she slapped his hand away.

"Okay. We'll go to the library."

"So you want me to come back to New York with you so that you can show me off to your friends." He glanced over to where Amalthya was sitting on the library table, swinging her legs back and forth.

"No! You make it sound like I'm going to parade you around like a piece of meat. You know you mean more to me than that. The holidays are a time to be with loved ones. And I love you. It's as simple as that."

"Is it?"

She smiled sheepishly. "Okay, maybe I want to show you off a little...but who wouldn't? And it's only for a week or two. I doubt the goblins would even notice you were gone."

He seemed to consider it for a moment. Then he looked back at her imploring face. "All right." He sighed.

They returned to her apartment late in the evening. Jareth had changed his clothes to jeans and a tee-shirt. His blond hair was pulled back into a simple ponytail. It would take a little getting used to, but she thought she would like the change. She took him by the hand and led him through the small rooms of the apartment. "I

know it's not what you're used to..."

"It's fine." He kissed her forehead. "Don't worry about trying to please me. I think you'll find I'm quite adaptable."

"There's just two more rooms to go." She led him down the narrow hallway that led to the spare room she painted in and the bed room. She opened the spare bedroom door. "I'm afraid it's rather messy at the moment." They walked inside together.

He didn't know what to say. Of course he had seen some of her works as he had watched her over the years, but there was nothing with which to compare the feeling of glancing around the small room and seeing himself enshrined in works of oil, acrylics, pencil and chalk. Her love for him emanated from the pictures as he looked from one to the other, to various poses and backdrops.

"Do you like them?"

"You have true talent, Amalthya. It's a rare and precious thing. Cherish it."

Her face was beaming as she met his eyes. "I know, and I do." She exited the room and went to the door across the hall. "This is it." She opened the door.

The bedroom was as he remembered it. It seems she had inherited her mother's predisposition for neatness. There was a tall bookshelf against one wall, lined with volumes of all sorts. The low dresser held a few personal effects, including a small gold music box which held the figure of a dark haired girl in a silver dress, which he recognized as having belonged to Sarah all those years ago. He picked it up and held it in the palm of his hand briefly.

"You still care about her."

"Yes." His voice was choked. "I suppose you can't spend years watching over someone and not feel *something* for them."

"But it wasn't love. Not really." She said quietly.

"No. I don't- I don't think I realized what real love was." He laughed softly. "The more I think about it, the more it seems I've wasted most of my life. Never even learned to love."

"But you have love. Here, now. With me."

"It appears so."

Her reply was interrupted by a knock on the door. "I'd better see who that is." She went out into the hall. Jareth set the glittering music box down on the desk and observed the little figure within. "You have no power over me." He said quietly, but it didn't make him feel any different.

"What was that?" Amalthya poked her head into the bedroom, dark hair fanning out around her.

"Hm, nothing. Who was at the door?"

"The neighbor lady. She dropped off an apple pie. That was sweet of her wasn't it? Are you okay?"

"Why?"

She came into the room and sat down on the bed next to him. "I don't know, you look a little sad." She said, brushing a stray wisp of hair off his forehead.

"I'm not. Just lost in thought, I guess. When did you say this Christmas party of yours was?"

"Not for two days. Then we're going by Xander's for Christmas eve.

"So that gives us some time to ourselves."

"Yes it does." She smiled. She leaned over and kissed him.

The King's Labyrinth Snow Angels 2/?

Lights from the street below were shining through the frost on the window making a curious and enchanting pattern on the wall. She rolled over and the clock on the bed side table read 4:30 AM. She pulled the white lace coverlet up to her chin. Beside her in the bed, Jareth was sleeping soundly. "Well, at least one of us is getting some sleep." She muttered. After half an hour of staring at the ceiling she gave up and crawled out of the bed. Bouts of insomnia weren't an infrequent occurrence for her but they were annoying none the less. She wandered into the kitchen and started the coffee maker. Obviously she was up for the day, so she might as well start her routine. She was cracking eggs into a pan to make herself an omelet when Jareth walked in. "I'm sorry, did I wake you?"

"No." He walked around behind her and kissed her on the cheek. "Why are you making breakfast at five in the morning?"

"I Couldn't sleep. The Christmas party is tonight, maybe it's nerves or something." She shrugged.

"Why would you be nervous about a party?"

"I don't know. Maybe I'm eager to show them I'm the same person I used to be. That I haven't changed."

"But you **have** changed." He was sitting in one of the kitchen chairs now, watching her with an almost critical eye. Amazing how he managed to still convey a very kingly aura even while sitting in her kitchen, hair mussed from sleep.

"Have I?" She set two plates down on the table and went into the refrigerator for some orange juice.

"Of course. You know full well that you have." There was an almost irritated tone in his voice. "I don't know why you keep going over this. We've both changed. For the better, I hope."

She sat down across from him. "I know. Maybe I'm trying to convince myself." She sighed. "I have errands to run today, so I guess you can either come with me or stay here."

"I think I'll go back to the castle. Kingdoms don't run themselves."

"All right. Can you be back here by seven?"

He nodded.

Amalthya hummed to herself as she took the hot rollers from her hair, admiring the curls they left behind. She picked up several hair-clips, shaped like butterflies with green crystals set into the wings, off the vanity, arranging and re-arranging them until she had the curls pulled up and out of her face. She twirled around once in front of the mirror, her emerald green dress fanning out around her.

Jareth was already waiting for her in the kitchen when she emerged from the bedroom. He was dressed in a dark suit, hair pulled back demurely. "Are you ready to go?"

"You bet. The gallery Christmas party is always the best." She smiled. "Silviet, Xander and the rest are as close as family." She took her winter coat out of the closet. "Did you call for a cab?" Jareth nodded. The weather was supposed to get bad later in the evening and she didn't want to worry about driving back. "Then let's go."

The King's Labyrinth Snow Angels 3/?

The party was already under way when Amalthya and Jareth entered the building. Silviet greeted them at the door and escorted them in.

"Silviet, this is Jareth."

"Of course. Pleased to meet you, Jareth."

"Likewise. Amalthya's told me much about you."

"Silviet, is Xander around? I wanted him to meet Jareth."

"He's this way." She said with a smile. The trio made their way to the back of the gallery where Xander and another man stood debating the veracity of modern art.

"What I can't see is why people are willing to pay thousands of dollars for something that looks like a five year old painted it."

"Chris, it's not the art itself, it's the message behind it. A five-year old's finger painting doesn't hold a larger theme. It's an exact rendering. If a child paints a barn, then it's a barn. If an artist paints one, it could be the representation of the memory of a sunny day spent napping in warm hay at grandfather's farm. You have to see the deeper meaning behind it."

Chris, an older man with a receding hairline, shook his head. "I understand you're convictions, Xander. I just can't see it. When

someone splatters a canvas with red, orange, and yellow paint, I don't see the sunset you do."

"Then I suggest you stick to your Renoir and Monet, my friend." Xander chuckled. He turned to face Amalthya and Jareth. "Hello Amalthya." He smiled. "I'm glad you made it. How's the weather outside? I hear it's supposed to snow more."

"It's not that bad out yet. Xander, I want you to meet Jareth."

"Hello." Xander extended his hand.

Jareth shook it. He looked at the man in front of him quizzically. He- he *knew* this man. He didn't know how- but he knew him.

"Is something the matter?"

Jareth recovered himself from the momentary reverie, brushing the odd feeling away as best he could. "Please excuse me. For a moment I thought I had met you before."

"Funny....I thought the same thing- but it couldn't be."

"No." Jareth agreed. "It isn't possible that we've met." He tried to clear his thoughts. "Well, it's a pleasure to meet you now, at any rate."

Amalthya watched the whole exchange uneasily. When the first opportunity presented itself, she pulled Jareth off to the side. "What was that about?"

"What?"

"The thing with Xander."

"I don't know. When I shook his hand- I was sure I'd met him before. But it simply isn't possible."

"Weird." Just then she spotted Rosslin from across the room. "Come on, I have more people to introduce."

The King's Labyrinth Snow Angels 4/4

Last part. Jareth's lines at the end are from 'Love' by Jones Very. It appeared on my poem-a-day calendar on the eighth, and it just fit.

Bamfy

"Well, if it isn't Ann's mystery man." Rosslin laughed. She was tall, with long ash blond hair. "I'm glad to meet you at last. I'll tell you, I didn't think you were a real person. Ann has such an imagination, after all."

"I seem to have gained quite a reputation."

"You could say that. There were some great theories as to who you

were. Jeff- well, let me go get him. I can't pass up a chance to rub it in his face." Rosslin dashed off into the sea of guests. Amalthya stood there laughing.

"Ros and Jeff have this fierce rivalry going. They pretend to hate each other but we're all taking bets on how long it'll take them to get together."

A moment later Rosslin appeared with a tall, dark haired man it tow. "Jeff, I want you to meet Jareth." Rosslin gave him a smug smile.

"Pleased to meet you." Jeff replied.

"Likewise."

Rosslin broke out in giggles. "I told you you were full of it Jeff."

"So I was wrong this time. I still say it was a good theory."

"Oh come off it!" The two wandered away, still embroiled in their conversation.

"You have such charming friends, my dear." Jareth chuckled.

"At least I *have* friends." She pouted in a way that reminded him painfully of Sarah. Damn. He was going to have to try harder to separate memories of mother and daughter. If only they weren't so alike. The similarity spoke volumes for genetics, he supposed. After all, she'd only known her mother for a tiny fragment of her life. He just hoped she hadn't inherited the disposition for insanity along with everything else. The thought left a cold feeling in the pit of his stomach. Better not to think of such things, he decided. Why worry over things that might never happen? After all, she had endured the years of her mother's madness. She had faced the death of both her parents in the span of a year. 'And she tried to kill herself,' a little voice in the back of his mind whispered. 'Mustn't forget about that.' He commanded the voice silent with all his will. Concentrate on enjoying the party.

"It's hot in here." Amalthya commented, not noticing that he had been lost in thought.

"It is rather warm. We could go outside for a bit."

She nodded. "Let's." They worked their way back to the main entrance and walked out on the concrete pad in front of the door. The gallery was blessed in that it had a small amount of yard around it. In the winter, Xander let the neighboring children come over to play in the snow. Several lop-sided snowmen grinned at them with charcoal smiles, and their crooked twig arms swayed slightly in the breeze. A little boy and girl were laughing and making snow angels. Amalthya spun around, head thrown back, arms out, snow swirling around her. Jareth smiled at the vision. She was laughing like a little girl, staring up at the stars.

"I asked of Time to tell me where was Love; He pointed to her foot-steps on the snow, Where first the angel lighted from above, And bid me note the way and onward go." He threw his own head back, took

a deep breath of the crisp air, and smiled. His 'Love' continued to dance and spin beneath the winter sky.

Fin

End
file.